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INTELLECTUALS AND THE GALICIAN REFUGEES DURING WORLD WAR I IN AUSTRIA-HUNGARY: DISPARATE ATTITUDES

INTRODUCTION

Soon after the outbreak of WWI Galicia, a crown land on the outskirts of the Habsburg Monarchy, became a theater of war between the armies of the Central Powers and Russia. Some civilians escaped or were evacuated then, usually deep into the Habsburg monarchy, thus starting the life of refugees¹ and meeting with the hardships of wartime in everyday life. This article outlines the issue of the attitudes of Austro-Hungarian intellectuals towards Galician refugees during WWI. Due to the extensive scope of this research problem the paper is limited to selected examples, both from Cisleithania (the Austrian part) and Transleithania (the Hungarian part of the Empire). One needs to take several aspects into consideration: ethnicity and religion, and ask the questions, who showed what kind of feelings towards the refugees and what role the intellectuals played in shaping the attitudes towards war immigrants. It needs to be noted that the behavior of aristocrats, politicians and officials towards

¹ The paper does not discuss the issue or present bibliography in detail. Of the latest works see Martina Hermann, “‘Cities of Barracks’: Refugees in the Austrian Part of the Habsburg Empire During the First World War,” in *Europe on the Move: Refugees in the Era of the Great War*, eds. Peter Gatrell and Liubov Zhvanko (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 129–155; Kamil Ruszała, “Galicijscy uchodźcy w Austro-Węgrzech w trakcie pierwszej wojny światowej,” in *Wielki Przełom. Konflikty zbrojne i przemiany wojskowości 1912–1923*, ed. Michał Bączkowski (Cracow: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 2018). One major title is the unpublished PhD thesis by W. Mentzl, see W. Mentzl, “Kriegsflüchtlinge in Cisleithanien im Ersten Weltkrieg,” Vienna 1997 (manuscript in the collection of the Library of the University of Vienna).

the Galicians will be omitted here, as otherwise the topic would considerably exceed the size of this paper.

The appearance of Galician refugees in the Habsburg monarchy met with various reactions from the local residents and local authorities. They ranged from kindness, understanding and sympathy towards the wandering Galicians, through indifference to extreme anti-immigrant feelings. It turned out that many Galicians knew very little about the western lands of the monarchy, but the citizens of the western countries did not have elementary knowledge about Galicia either. On the one hand the refugees did not know where they were going, and even if they did, the geographical name was often unfamiliar to them anyway. On the other hand, though, local residents were apprehensive of who would come to them and with what purpose. Often without any notice a crowd of strangers would appear in the streets of a town. Also the information that a refugee camp would be created near the town sounded terrifying. Nobody knew what it would look like and who would be accommodated in it. There was no information how the close presence of total strangers would influence the local life, safety and economy. Not without significance were rumors and popular stereotypes, which as a rule showed the refugees in a very bad light.

THE REFUGEES FROM GALICIA — HOW MANY WERE THEY AND WHO WERE THEY?

The statistics showing the scale of evacuation from Galicia are vague. The contemporary press wrote that in March 1915 over 380,000 refugees had emigrated to Austrian countries. With the refugees accommodated in Hungary, the number needs to be estimated at 450–500,000.² It was assessed that almost half of them were Poles, over 40% Jews and 6% Ukrainians,³ which all together made up 1/16 of the population of Galicia (i.e. slightly over 6%).⁴ The number of prewar population of Galicia was taken into account here, which according to the 1910 census was over 8 million.⁵ Another newspaper note, of April 1915, said that the refugees from Galicia and Bukovina made up 800,000 all together.⁶ Others offered

² The number 100,000 of Galician refugees in Hungary corresponds to other press reports, cf.: *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, 23 June 1916 (no. 171), 3.

³ In Austrian sources referred to as “the Ruthenians” (Germ. Ruthenen), which is a broader term than “the Ukrainians.” Nonetheless, in this paper the term “Ukrainian” is used.

⁴ *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, 31 March 1915 (no. 73), 4.

⁵ Exactly 8,025,675 people, cf.: Krzysztof Zamorski, *Informator statystyczny do dziejów społeczno-gospodarczych Galicji. Ludność Galicji w latach 1857–1910* (Cracow and Warsaw: Uniwersytet Jagielloński and Polskie Towarzystwo Statystyczne, 1989), 84–86.

⁶ *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, 11 April 1915 (no. 83), 1–2.

the number of 1.1 million refugees from Galicia, which would constitute over 13% of the whole prewar Galicia population.⁷ In this case the difference in estimates is quite big and all the data needs to be verified. From the social point of view it must be noted that the ones who left Galicia represented all social groups, i.e. both intellectuals, peasants and laborers. Therefore emigration and exile were classless experiences. The refugees were accommodated in various places: both in specially created refugee camps and in particular towns of the monarchy. The Galicians were clearly diversified in terms of ethnicity, religion and social class, yet the locals would associate them all with the stigmatizing term “refugee”; the words used at the time were the German “Flüchtling” or the Czech “Uprchlík,” both of which in the opinion of Galician refugees had negative connotations.

Undoubtedly, sending such a large number of people far into Austria was a completely new experience to both sides. The local authorities wanted to put their residents’ minds at rest and to that end they had to learn how to deal with the refugees, and above all — what influence the refugees who had settled earlier in other places of the monarchy had on the local relations. Moreover, the people molding public opinion, people of authority in the local circles (intellectuals), played a major role in the reception of Galician refugees in the community. Their attitudes were diverse. It is worth presenting both negative and positive ones, indicating their reasons, based on particular case studies.

OPINIONS AGAINST THE REFUGEES

To discuss critical opinions of the Galician refugees I am going to use several examples recorded in the sources, including one from the town of Sankt Andrä in Carinthia. Over fifteen hundred emigrants from Galicia found provisional accommodation there. The local people might have been scared by the fact that the number of the refugees was almost twice higher than the local population (ca. 1,500 refugees against 800 locals, i.e. approximately 65% to 35%), which was a burden in terms of food supplies. Faced with that situation the local mayor Anton Pichler controlled the proper functioning of district economy himself, in order to keep proper local relations. That did not eliminate the local residents’ discontent, which led to open protests. In early September the Counselor of the National Government of Carinthia, Richard Freiherr von Ott visited the town paying special attention to the refugee accommodation and provisions. Then Leopold Pongratz, deputy to the Vienna Parliament on behalf of the German National Association (Deutscher Nationalverband), a native of Sankt Andrä, complained

⁷ See e.g. “Wymowne cyfry. Bilans polskiego tułactwa,” *Ilustrowany Kuryer Codzienny*, 11 Jan 1916 (no. 10), 1–2.

about the presence of the immigrants from Galicia in the town. Richard Ott, who was understanding towards the exiles, admonished the deputy that Austria was at war and in that hard time every citizen must show devotion to the home country and offer help to the ones in need, including the refugees. He also assured the member of parliament that the Galicians did not pose any threat to the local residents. Deputy Pongratz, not satisfied with the response, declared he would file a complaint about that issue to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.⁸ That confrontation of an official and a local politician who had gathered opinions of the locals, perfectly shows the divergence of opinion on refugees among the higher classes on local level. Similar incidents occurred also in other parts of the monarchy. For instance, in the Upper-Styrian town of Admont a certain official, Doctor of Law, said in late September 1914: "Accommodating Galician refugees in Admont is a scandal."⁹ The authorities preferred a rational approach in order to keep proper relations with all the sides. They did not want to provoke any conflicts, but ensure a sense of stability for the local people, also because it was they who elected them for particular functions, not the immigrants. They knew that when intellectuals voiced opinions like the one quoted, negative rumors about the strangers from Galicia reached and influenced the local community.

Also the behavior of the lower-level administrative apparatus might have been a negative example for the local community. What added to the bad situation was ordinary instigation (with the tacit consent of local authorities). For instance, from a town of Hlinsko in Bohemia a desperate letter came accusing the natives to be above the law and harass the refugees with impunity, hitting them with snowballs, insulting or beating. That happened to e.g. a young Pole and a young Jew because they spoke Polish, not Czech. What was more, all the incidents took place with the consent of the mayor, who himself incited his people to calling the refugees thieves and slobs.¹⁰ All this shows how some incidents directed against the immigrants had the permission of local authorities — institutions supposed to control public safety and regulate the functioning of the local community. That consent and even the mere lack of open criticism, brought about specific reactions of the local people. The ones who suffered were the refugees, stereotypically perceived as swindlers, as ill or dirty, generally suspicious. The ones most affected were those who were not guilty of any abuse and only hoped for a humanitarian approach and basic care. It was just some of them whose conduct brought about the stigmatization of the whole

⁸ Kärntner Landesarchiv, Landesregierung, Präsi., Sch. 356, Zl. 5331/1914.

⁹ Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv (StLA), Admont-Markt, Kt. 97, Fasz. Flüchtlingsunterbringung 1914–1944, Zl. 1191.

¹⁰ Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (ÖStA), Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv (AVA), Ministerium des Innern (Mdl), Allgemeine (Allg.), Fasz. 19, Kt. 1926, Zl. 5738/1915.

refugee community. Extreme attitudes never brought any good results, leading only to aggravating the hatred. Without a doubt such a demonstration before the native people created a huge barrier between the immigrants and the locals — de facto citizens of the same monarchy.

It is worth quoting an example from the western spot of the monarchy. Albert Bechtold, a well-known Austrian sculptor, was 29 on the day WWI broke out. He was born in Götzis, a small town with slightly over 4,000 people before the war, located in Vorarlberg, a crown land of the Habsburg monarchy, situated over a thousand kilometers away from Galicia. In the late September 1914 Bechtold noted down in his diary: “Today a few hundred from Galicia were landed in Bregenz. Allegedly refugees, among them suspicious, perfidious rabble.”¹¹ His words did not only reflect his individual feelings towards the strangers from Galicia; they translated into a general feeling stigmatizing the people from the north-eastern borderlands of the monarchy. What did this attitude stem from? Above all, from the ignorance of society, including upper classes. In fact the Alemannic Austrians who lived in the remote western province of the Habsburg monarchy didn’t know the first thing about Galicia and its residents. The strangers were looked at with suspicion, treated like savages. The languages they used were completely unknown: Polish, not to mention Ukrainian. The old image of Galicia as “half-Asia” remained long in the minds of the residents of the other parts of the monarchy, long after the Great War and even after WWII.

It needs to be said that representatives of educated classes did not yield in to the refugee-stigmatizing stereotypes as often as lower classes. Nonetheless, intelligentsia was not homogeneous either: it included groups clearly negative towards the refugees, who, using their connections tried to influence opinion-forming media, like the press. That resulted from their political views: the majority of intellectuals speaking out against the refugees came from conservative circles. Perhaps the most adequate example is the situation in Vienna, where the mayor, representing the conservative Christian Social Party, was from the start prejudiced against Galician refugees. The mayor of Vienna, Richard Weiskirchner, as early as September 1914 pointed out to the Ministry of Internal Affairs the need to expel the refugees from Vienna.¹² The mayor is not remembered positively in the context of the war refugees staying in the city. They did not suit the views of his political party, mainly because it was deeply anti-Semitic.¹³ Professor Bolesław Wicherkiewicz, a Cracow ophthalmologist in exile

¹¹ Ingrid Adamer, *Albert Bechtold 1885–1965* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2002), 41.

¹² ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Allg., Fasz. 19, Kt. 1921, Zl. 38107/1914.

¹³ Leon Biliński wrote openly about the anti-Semitic attitude of the Vienna authorities. See Leon Biliński, *Wspomnienia i dokumenty*, vol. 1: 1864–1914 (Warsaw: Księgarnia F. Hoesicka, 1924), 316.

in Vienna during the war, commented on the mayor ironically in his wartime dossier. He wrote that the mayor's attitude towards the refugees is a manifestation of "a non-Christian orientation" (while Weisskirchner represented a political party with Christianity in its name).¹⁴ Another problem, which could become a subject of a separate paper, is the reaction of the Galician intellectuals in exile to castigating the people who escaped the crown land. Without getting deeper into this topic, however interesting it may be, it is worth quoting the above mentioned Professor Bolesław Wicherkiewicz, who also referred to that issue in his dossier. He seemed to assume that modern Polish-Austrian relations, like e.g. the relief of Vienna of 1863, had been completely forgotten by the ungrateful Austrians. He added that Galician refugees were accused of all evil in the capital of the monarchy: "The refugees are guilty of overcrowding on the trams, in the streets, that food is getting more and more expensive, that we need to eat the inedible war bread; as if all that was not the result of this war, the war that the Poles did not want at all, the war that is wreaking havoc on their country."¹⁵

These blunt words indeed reflect the lack of understanding or sympathy towards the exiles in Austria-Hungary, and at the same time the attitude of an intellectual standing in their defense, as he had left for Vienna himself exactly because of the war. He died following an illness in December 1915 at the age of 68.

A CALL FOR HUMANITARIANISM

In the face of negative feelings towards the refugees in April 1915 the Ministry of Internal Affairs issued an appeal to domestic authorities in Austria, enclosing guidelines as to how the local authorities and the local residents were to treat the arrivals from the Empire borderlands. The introduction outlined the history of the Galician refugees and further on the text indicated the obligations a political authority ought to meet, i.e. provide a temporary (which was emphasized) accommodation, food and clothes to the refugees, as well as any other material and moral support. The document said that in order to fulfill those tasks it was necessary to establish a collaboration with private people and charitable institutions. The plight of the exiles was emphasized and the fact they had been separated from their home lands. It was therefore necessary to offer them help, particularly where there were significant economic differences, i.e. the prices were much higher than in Galicia. The document pointed out how important the refugees' mental health was and the need to minimize their alienation caused by the language

¹⁴ Bogusław Dybaś, Rudolf Jaworski, and Mariusz Wołos, eds., *Bolesław Wicherkiewicz i jego wizja sprawy polskiej w 1915 roku* (Vienna: Polska Akademia Nauk. Stacja Naukowa, 2016), 136.

¹⁵ Ibid.

barrier.¹⁶ The appeal was issued definitely too late, as the anti-refugee feelings had already taken hold among the local people, resulting in a lot of riots. The document did not bring an expected result; reluctance towards the emigrants did not disappear after its publication. However, it was an attempt to react, which meant that the authorities did notice and feel the negative public feelings.

Nonetheless, it was not a ministerial decree that could bring about sympathy and help to the exiles from Galicia. Everything was to be based on grassroots work managed by local authorities. That is why apart from negative attitudes we can also find positive aspects, when the refugees found support and understanding on the part of local intellectuals. It is worth basing this discussion on particular case studies. As I would not like to focus on Vienna only, I am going to present an interesting aspect from other Austrian crown lands.

A group of Galician refugees ended up in Salzburg, a city of culture and Mozart heritage. Reportedly, the group consisted of several thousand people (while the population of Salzburg before the war was over 56,000). On 3 October 1914 Hermann Bahr, born half a century before in the Upper Austrian city of Linz, a well-known writer and essayist, published an article called “Die polnischen Flüchtlinge in Salzburg”¹⁷ (The Polish Refugees in Salzburg) in the *Salzburger Wacht* newspaper. In the article, whose contents had been somewhat cut by the censorship, the intellectual spoke out in defense of the Galician immigrants, arguing that the locals drew their knowledge on false rumors that the arrivals were suspicious, being spies or Russian agents. Bahr wrote point-blank that they were nothing of the kind, only victims escaping before the Cossack attack, in need of support and relief from the locals. Bahr summed up his article in the following words: “Good Salzburg people, help! Bring money and things! And above all: come along and see the exiles’ lament for yourselves.” In that way he wanted to appeal to the readers’ sentiments. The essayist referred to the figure of Professor Franz Kulstrunk,¹⁸ who, as one of the first of the local intellectuals had rushed to the newcomers’ rescue, despite their general stigmatization, using his own means. Kulstrunk was called The Patron (“Schirmherr”) and tutelary spirit (“Schutzgeist”). The local artist, Professor Franz Kulstrunk, despite seeing barriers (esp. the language one) between the Galician arrivals and himself, felt the need to come to the rescue. He organized a collection of clothes, toys and books, which he then handed over to the refugees. Such examples from above, writer Bahr’s words and artist Kulstrunk’s actions, were supposed to be a model for the local residents. Kulstrunk also wrote in the *Salzburger Volksblatt* about

¹⁶ ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Allg., Fasz. 19, Kt. 1929, Zl. 16119/1915.

¹⁷ *Salzburger Wacht*, 3 Oct 1914 (no. 223), 3.

¹⁸ More on Franz Kulstrunk in: *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon 1815–1950*, vol. 4 (Vienna: H. Böhlau Nachf., 1969), 344.

the relief action for the refugees and their further needs.¹⁹ Thanks to that kind of activity society was informed that refugees were not traitors but war victims.

As part of the action a lot of relief committees were set up in many smaller towns in Moravia and Bohemia and also in other western Austrian lands. An example of a committee set up on the initiative of a local scholar and community worker was the Bohemian-Polish Secretariat in Prague, founded and managed by František Hovorka known as a friend of Poles. That institution played a significant role helping Galician immigrants in Prague, though, in accordance with its name, the relief focused solely on the Poles, ignoring the Jews and Ukrainians, who were also in Prague at the time.²⁰ In fact the key to acting for the benefit of the refugees was ethnic and religious in nature. Thus the Poles, Jews and Ukrainians from Galicia were represented by these national groups respectively.

The Jewish people were ones who met with harassment the most frequently; it was they who were accused of high prices during wartime, destabilization of local economy through buying out products and pushing up prices while selling them etc. Undoubtedly, such situations did take place, however one could not generalize about the whole group using individual incidents, as it was done back then. Still, people's reactions were diverse and one could also see appeals to keep common sense and humanitarian attitudes. I have already mentioned the appeal of April 1915, calling for helping the refugees. In the face of provisions shortages no such appeals brought about the intended results. What was left was only individual struggle of authorities for social justice and abandoning further negative attitudes towards the immigrants. Due to the provisions crisis in Styria, on 8 March 1915 David Herzog, the Rabbi of Styria, Carinthia and Carniola, Professor of the Graz University, whom the refugees called "the father of Jewish people,"²¹ sent a letter to the governor of Styria, Manfred von Clary-Aldringen. He emphasized that in the light of the anti-refugee feelings in the city, it was desirable to show a merciful approach to helping the people from Galicia and treat them simply as humans.²² While the governor shared the rabbi's opinion (himself being a co-founder of the National Committee for the Relief to the Refugees in Graz), even his authority could not stop the spreading of anti-

¹⁹ Cf.: the letter to the editor sent by Franz Kulstrunk "Zur Hilfsaktion für die Polen" published in *Salzburger Volksblatt*, 18 Oct 1914 (no. 236), 9.

²⁰ The Bohemian-Polish Secretariat in Prague ought not to be confused with the Bohemian-Polish Club set up on the initiative of a historian from Charles University in Prague, Professor Jaroslav Bidlo.

²¹ Stadtarchiv Graz, Mag., Präs., Kt. 282, Zl. 1117/1914.

²² StLA, Statthaltereie (Statth.), Präs., Korr. 1915/H: David Herzog do Manfred von Clary und Aldringen, Graz, 8 March 1915.

-refugee feelings among the hungry and cold people of Styria. The situation was very tense. The *Grazer Tagespost* published an article on 23 April 1915 which described an incident on one of Graz markets on a street leading from Eggenberg Castle. A “Polish Jewess” was accused there of artificially raising the prices, and then beaten up. The same newspaper published another note a few days later, on 28 April 1915, about milk shortages, which ended with a question: “Have the Galician Jews had something to do with it again?” David Herzog, fed up with the whole immigrant community being stigmatized, reacted to the situation with another letter of 28 April 1915, this time addressed to the *Grazer Tagespost*. He argued that he had been involved in helping the Galician war exiles for eight months, so he was familiar with their conduct. He wrote that everyone noticed provision shortages and the Galician Jews were held guilty for them. The rabbi, who wanted to be objective, admitted that the Galician Jews did trade with goods they’d bought outside the city at the end of 1914 and beginning of the next year, which resulted in higher prices. He stressed, however, that such procedure did not take place later and criticized the police for not having stopped the illegal trading right from the start. He also mentioned that a lot of Galician Jews were deported to refugee camps in Moravia, and the remaining ones were honest and well-known to the rabbi. The scholar, referring to the question put at the end of the incriminating article, answered it in his letter, saying that Jewish immigrants did not drink milk, only their children did, but was that indeed the reason for all the shortages? Herzog strongly criticized the people who in his opinion were carried away by blind fury and envy, generalizing the conduct of dodgy individuals on the whole immigrant community. He appealed for understanding and sympathy. Herzog’s text was not published by the newspaper; it is known only from copies which ended up on a censor’s desk.²³ To prevent false accusations resulting in social unrest, the authorities tried to stabilize the situation through issuing appropriate directives. For instance, in March 1915 a circular letter was sent out, calling for stopping any actions directed against Galician Jews.²⁴ Those efforts taken by individual authorities in Graz were not always successful, as negative feelings were rife along with successive years of the havoc-wreaking war.

Also in Hungary the presence of refugees led to the escalation of conflicts. Some intelligentsia circles made attempts to draw up a Polish-Hungarian agreement. Let us quote an episode in the publishing activity of Dezső Kosztolányi or the work of Albert Nyáry, a president of a Polish-Hungarian club, who published

²³ ÖStA, Kriegsarchiv, Zentralstelle, Kriegsministerium, Kriegsüberwachungsamt, Kt. 16, Zl. 9193/1914.

²⁴ Národní archiv České republiky, PP 1916–1920, sign. M34/1, Kt. 3017, Zl. 492/1915.

an article on the problem of the refugees in 1917 in the *Budapesti Hirlap*.²⁵ Let us take a closer look at Dezső Kosztolányi, who was 29 when the war broke out. He was one of the founders of the Budapest *Nyugat* magazine, whose authors after 1914 wrote anti-war texts and poems.²⁶ On 26 August 1916 the Jewish weekly *Egyenlőség* published Kosztolányi's article titled "We, the twenty-five thousand people."²⁷ It started with a short note that as a result of the war events (in that case Brusilov's offensive of June 1916) another wave of people left Galicia to settle in Transleithania. The title of the article referred to the estimated number of the immigrants. The text is full of pathos and its author identifies himself with the Galician exiles through the words: "We, the twenty-five thousand miserable souls from Galicia, sick and tired orphans, direct our exhausted words to you, Hungarian peasants"²⁸ — the recipient of the text was thus defined. Further on the narrator explains the reason why the Galicians had found themselves in Hungary, arguing that their home land had been occupied and ravaged by the enemy, and so their new, though temporary, home land would be the land of Hungarian peasants:

We're coming to you as your humble guests. We scratch at your door with our yellowish fingers. We ask for a cup of water and a bed to lie on. Or perhaps not even as much. We only ask you to get to know us better. See a human being in our face and a brother in our eyes. And when we walk on the outskirts of your village with our ragged colorful bundles in the vicinity of your fields, you call your dogs, which cling on to our legs and want to tear off us the rest of the rags which we haven't been deprived of yet.²⁹

The refugees from Galicia who had arrived in Hungary, asked the locals to understand their situation. They stressed that their stay was merely temporary and they only sought shelter for some time. Then there appeared brutal words about the reasons for their escape: "The troops have not reached here yet, you have yet to hear the trumpets of the last judgment. Your newborn babies were not thrown out of the windows by savage soldiers."³⁰ That message might have influenced the reader's minds, especially by repeating that the ravages of war had not reached Hungary "yet," suggesting that during the war

²⁵ *Księga pamiątkowa i adresowa wygnańców wojennych z Galicyi i Bukowiny 1914–1915*, part I: *Lwów* (Vienna: Drukiem J.N. Vernay'a, 1915), *passim*.

²⁶ Mario D. Fenyo, *Literature and Political Change: Budapest 1908–1918* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1987), 55 and below. See in particular Chapter V: *The Political Attitudes of the 'Nyugat' Writers*.

²⁷ *Egyenlőség*, 26 Aug 1916 (no. 35), 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

nothing is certain and one day they might be forced to flee, too. The situations described in the text corresponded to the experience of the immigrants and instilled uncertainty in the Hungarian civilians, who saw war completely differently than the Galician refugees, not having been forced to escape their own homes. The narrator continued as follows:

All our belongings: a few items of clothing, several prayer books and a scruffy old umbrella. These are things we are still attached to, God knows why. Maybe because we have nothing else. We carry them like a nobleman carries his coat of arms. They are an emblem of our poverty, our misery. They denote our homes we will never see again. Sometimes when we are waiting at night in a muddy, smoke-filled train station, we gratefully squeeze the wooden handle of the umbrella and think it is a living hand, holding ours. We think it is the hand of those who are already dead and cold, those whom we loved, the hand of our wife, daughter, who may be running somewhere, who knows where. We have always worn black, even when others dressed up. The misery of this world did not catch us unawares. We didn't even have to change our mourning robes.

Now a Galician Jew is standing on your doorstep. His face is white as a sheet, his eyes red with bitter tears. Is he a stranger to you? No, he cannot be a stranger. Because you know all suffering. An ancient wanderer is knocking at your door, a bewildered wanderer of the century. His home he carries on his back, his bread on his chest...³¹

Apart from presenting the current feelings of the Galician exiles, a request repeats not to judge them through stereotypes. The Jews also mention that their co-religionists should show understanding, as their (the arrivals') "hot, ruby blood is similar to yours" (the civilians'), as the author notes.³² He adds that because they are the same, they would be able to come to an agreement. The text was directed at Jewish readers (due to the newspaper's profile) but it reflects a general lack of sympathy for the immigrants in Hungary. The result was not adequate to the scale of the problem, but it was an important attempt to establish a dialogue between the refugees and the locals by an intellectual. Despite such initiatives the general feelings did not change and they were even exacerbated, especially in 1918, when Budapest became an attractive destination — the pretext was exile, but the real reason was economic migration, searching better prospects than in the war-ravaged Galicia. It would have seemed that crossing the Carpathians gave the fleeing Galicians a sense of temporary relief from danger. The natural mountain border was supposed to protect them from enemy, but, as it turned out, it did not defend them from the hardships of everyday life in the province of the lands of the Crown of Saint Stephen. It was no different in Budapest.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

Although the city remained in the shadow of Vienna, before WWI it was a metropolis and a symbol of Hungarian prosperity. The Hungarians were proud of it and, like in Vienna, the sight of Galician refugees, above all the Jews, in their opinion clashed with the *corso* in the Pest part of the city or other major roads. However, the major role was played by economic factors, as indeed there were no grounds for maintaining “alien” refugees in the difficult period of wartime economy. The role of Hungarian intellectuals was marginal compared with the scale of the problem and the life hardships of the Galician immigrants, but it constitutes hard evidence of actual involvement of a very narrow group of the literati.

STRANGERS? INTEREST IN THE REFUGEES

Apart from attempts to mold the public opinion on Galician exiles, supposed to bring about positive or negative results, a clear “academic interest” in the refugees was seen in certain intellectuals. The immigrants would arouse interest in a few fields: ethnography, anthropology and propaganda. Let us present some examples.

One manifestation of Austrian intellectuals’ ethnographic interest in Galician refugees was a documentation and presentation of Ukrainian culture. It was not without reason that as part of the exhibition devoted to the relief to immigrants a reconstruction of a Ukrainian peasant cottage was prepared and a show of Ukrainian folk cloths,³³ and the refugees were photographed in their folk dress.³⁴ It is doubtful whether all that was meant to present the culture and tradition of the Ukrainians from Galicia or break with the negative stereotypes of them as criminals or traitors. Usually such attempts did not reach wider circles of the local community and did not meet with a deeper interest. It is possible that the collections and exhibitions were meant to be used for the sake of propaganda, showing alleged interest in the Habsburg subjects from the remote Galicia, which was nowhere near any real involvement.

On the other hand, refugees were also present in academic work. We ought to mention a few figures from completely different circles. One of them was Jacob

³³ The materials from that exhibition are still kept in the Ethnographic Museum in Vienna (Volkskundemuseum Wien) and they were used to prepare an exhibition in 2014. For its catalogue see Kathrin Pallestrang and Julie Thorpe, eds., *Stick- und Knüpfmuster ruthenischer Flüchtlinge im Ersten Weltkrieg: aus der Sammlung des Volkskundemuseums Wien* (Vienna: Österreichisches Museum f. Volkskde, 2014).

³⁴ See e.g. the photographs in the collection of Diözesanarchiv St. Pölten. For the photos from the Ukrainian exhibition as part of the general exhibition dedicated to the relief for the refugees see ÖStA, Archiv der Republik, Bundeskanzleramt, Sonderlegungen, Kriegsflüchtlinge, Kt. 17.

Moreno, a psychiatrist and sociologist, born in 1889 in Bucharest.³⁵ During WWI he made interesting observations while working in the Lower Austrian refugee camps. That influenced his later reflections, which he presented in his work published in the USA many years after the end of WWI.³⁶

Another person who showed interest in Galician refugees was Alois Pontoni, born in 1857 in Gorizia, graduate of medical studies at the University of Vienna between 1877 and 1883.³⁷ In the late August 1916 Doctor Pontoni prepared a typescript titled “Zur Psychologie eines Flüchtlingsproblems” in Graz, in which he presented his observations on the mental health of the refugees, referring to their experiences and the care they received. His inspiration had been a visit to a refugee camp in Wagna bei Leibnitz in Styria.³⁸ It was not the only work expressing interest in the refugees that he authored: he also prepared a separate sketch on the health of children.³⁹ Those manuscripts were evidence of the interest of a wider social group in how the refugee experience would affect society after the war. It seems, however, that they did not meet with a wide response, remaining merely some evidence of an intellectual’s contribution.

Finally, an anthropological interest in the refugees staying in the Niederalp camp near Salzburg resulted in 1919 in a defense of the PhD thesis by Hella Pösch — a figure much more associated with her disgraceful activity after 1938. That Austrian anthropologist, also known by her previous name of Helene Schürer von Waldheim, in 1915 as a young researcher started anthropological, ethnographic and prehistoric studies at the University of Vienna, carrying out simultaneous research on 700 families from Volhynia. In March 1919 at the age of 26 Pösch completed her PhD thesis at her home university; the work has remained typewritten.⁴⁰ Interestingly, Hella Pösch was married to a well-known

³⁵ Cf.: Friederike Scherr, “Jakob Levy Moreno im Flüchtlingslager Mitterndorf a.d. Fische – eine Spurensuche,” *Zeitschrift für Psychodrama und Soziometrie* 12, Suppl. 1 (2013): 3–126.

³⁶ Cf.: Jacob L. Moreno, *Who Shall Survive: A New Approach to the Problem of Human Interrelations* (Washington: Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing, 1934); Moreno, *Die Grundlagen der Soziometrie. Wege zur Neuordnung der Gesellschaft* (Cologne and Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1967).

³⁷ Information on that doctor from Archiv der Universität Wien courtesy of HR Mag. Thomas Maisel MAS.

³⁸ At that time in the camp there were already Italian refugees from Friuli, as the Polish refugees from Galicia for whom the camp had been set up, returned to Galicia or were transferred to other places in the summer of 1915.

³⁹ ÖStA, AVA, MdI, Allg., Fasz. 19, Kt. 1942, Zl. 48275/1915.

⁴⁰ See that thesis in Helene Schürer von Waldheim, “Antropologische und vererbungs-wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen an wohlynischen Flüchtlingsfamilien” (Vienna 1919) (typescript in Fachbereichsbibliothek Biologie der Universität Wien). For the printed thesis see Hella Pösch, *Ukrainische Wolhynier von Hella Pösch*, Archiv für Rassenbilder vol. 3 (München: J.F. Lehmann Verlag, 1926).

anthropologist Rudolf Pöch, who came from Ternopil in Galicia and conducted research on prisoners of war. She married him soon after the defense of her PhD thesis.⁴¹ She was definitely better known for her activity after 1938, when she closely collaborated with the NSDAP Office of Racial Policy.

The above examples prove that the intellectual circles in the western countries of the Habsburg monarchy also showed an academic interest in war immigrants. Whether the subjects were treated as “strangers,” as the title of this paragraph suggests, it is hard to tell unequivocally, as in the preserved research one cannot see any emphasis on strangeness, only a clear, empirical academic approach. The works did not feature in a wider community, which means they were actually used for academic or administrative purposes.⁴²

FINAL REMARKS

This article presents the attitudes of intellectuals who lived and worked in the Habsburg monarchy during World War I towards Galician refugees. The paper uses case studies, as it would not be possible to treat the issue comprehensively. The case studies prove that there were very diversified attitudes. On the one hand one can see clear reluctance or perhaps even fear of the groups of refugees — inhabitants of the multinational Galicia, which had seen warfare at the very start of the conflict. Those sentiments usually stemmed from the repeated stereotypical opinions on Galicia's and its residents' backwardness. On the other hand, what significantly contributed to harboring those feelings was complete ignorance of that remote crown land and its residents, due to which the majority of people saw them as potential suspects, possibly Russian spies, often lumping them all together, without differentiating among the Poles, Ukrainians and Jews. Besides the politicians it was the intelligentsia whose role was supposed to influence the public feelings and to moderate them. As it has been proved, also the intellectuals' own sentiments were not homogeneous. What definitely did not help was the beliefs and political views which often made local people critical towards the refugees, disturbing local life including the economy. On the other hand, some communities stood in defense of the refugees, presenting them as war victims, forced to escape from their home land. Starting a relief action was supposed to give a good example to the others. Were these actions

⁴¹ More on that topic e.g. in: Andrew D. Evans, *Anthropology at War: World War I and the Science of Race in Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

⁴² The evidence may be a written letter of thanks to Doctor Pontoni for preparing a study on the psychological problem of the refugees sent from the governor's office in Styria. See StLA, Statth., Präsi., Korr. 1916/P.

successful? It seems that what with the war destroying the state economy and hardships fuelling the negative public feelings, the aim was not reached. High prices and general shortages in provisions and accommodation were allegedly caused — in the opinion of the “hosts” — by the presence of the “guests.” The state, despite the official actions, was not able to deal with that problem.

The last part of the article presents the work of intellectual groups who showed interest in war refugees. Apart from the propaganda aspect (organizing exhibitions), there was also the clear empirical approach, conducting research on the new arrivals with the aim to attract a wider attention to the new phenomenon which was exile and its consequences (mainly for the human psyche).

It is worth asking a final question: are there any voices missing? Considering the intelligentsia as a whole, what seems to be missing here is a clear stand of the church circles in the Austrian countries, in Bohemia or in Hungary, which might have moderated the public feelings.⁴³ Nonetheless, even that opinion would not have changed the general public sentiments of the wartime.

⁴³ I do not mean here the opinion of the Catholic Church in Galicia as the activity of the then Bishop of Cracow Adam Sapieha and his relief committee for the war victims drew attention to the refugees staying deep in the monarchy.